

## **THE GLOBAL YOUTH TOBACCO SURVEY – SRI-LANKA**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS) project developed by the World Health Organization and the US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention to control tobacco use among youth in the countries around the world is based on a common study using the identical methodology and common questionnaire. This is a preliminary report prepared based on the survey data collected in the Sri-Lankan national study.

#### *WHO Resolution*

Between 1970 and 1995, WHO adopted 14 resolutions on the need for the both national and international tobacco control policies. Four of the 14 resolutions are relevant to the UNF Project-GYTS Survey. Member states were encouraged to implement comprehensive tobacco control strategies that contain the following:

- 1) Measures to ensure that non-smokers receive effective protection, to which they are entitled, from involuntary exposure to tobacco smoke.
- 2) Measures to promote abstention from the use of tobacco so as to protect children and young people from becoming addicted.
- 3) The establishment of programmes of education and public information on tobacco and health issues, including smoking cessation programmes, with active involvement of the health professions and the media.
- 4) Monitoring of trends in smoking and other form of tobacco use, tobacco -related diseases, and effectiveness of national smoking control action.

#### *Public Health Impact*

Despite widespread knowledge of the harm caused by smoking, only modest success has been achieved in global tobacco control initiatives. WHO estimates that there are currently 3.5 million deaths a year from tobacco, a figure expected to rise to about 10 million by 2030. By that date 70% of those deaths will occur in developing countries.

Tobacco use is considered to be one of the chief preventable causes of deaths in the world. Most people begin using tobacco before the age of 18. Recent trends indicate that the smoking prevalence rate among adolescent is rising; and age of initiation is becoming younger. If these patterns continue tobacco use will result in deaths of 250 million children and young people alive today, many of them in developing countries. Therefore, adolescents and school –aged children should be a primary focus for intervention strategies. Carefully designed survey should provide a clear picture of the risk factor behaviors of young and school-aged children which then can be used to set up more effective and comprehensive tobacco control policies.